Comment of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.)
On The House Vote To Impeach
President Donald J. Trump
December 18, 2019

This evening the U.S. House of Representatives exercised one of its most significant powers by impeaching President Donald J. Trump, making him just the third president in U.S. history to be impeached.

The House did not make this historic decision lightly. After a deliberate, months-long investigation involving hundreds of hours of testimony from more than a dozen witnesses and multiple public hearings, the House concluded that President Trump abused the powers of his office for purely personal gain by corruptly trying to coerce a foreign ally facing Russian aggression to investigate his domestic political rival. The House also concluded that the President systematically obstructed Congress – obstruction grounded in neither law nor precedent – in its constitutionally authorized inquiry, in order to hide his misconduct. As the Speaker solemnly stated earlier today, the House believed that President Trump – and the Constitution, which every House Member has sworn to uphold above all else – left no choice but to impeach.

Every senator has taken that same oath to the Constitution. And all 100 senators will take yet another oath to serve as impartial jurors during the Senate's trial to determine whether to convict and remove President Trump from office. Whether the Senate functions as a true court of impeachment as the Founders' envisioned – steadfastly pursuing the truth and upholding our oaths to pursue impartial justice – or functions merely as President Trump's legal defense team will define us for decades to come. History will not look kindly upon those who place loyalty to this or any other president above our oaths to the Constitution.

I have seen the Senate, at its best, rise to the occasion to be the conscience of the nation. If there ever were a time for the Senate to serve as the conscience of the nation, it is now.

# # # # #